

# Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

Volume 136, Issue 101

February 2013

## January Teen Death Rate Somewhat Lower

Source: <http://www.google.com> ♦

### Lessons Learned

A Google News search of teens killed thus far in January revealed that at least 43 teens died in motor vehicle collisions during the month. This Google search of news reports is not a scientific survey and it doesn't turn up all of the news articles nor does it reflect the official statistics by state safety agencies. It is safe to assume that many more teens were killed than were reported in this search. This search didn't include teen passengers killed while an adult was at the wheel or teens that were killed in multiple car crashes where an adult was deemed to be at fault for causing the collision. It only included fatal crashes in which the teen driver was alleged to have been at fault.

Sponsored by

**LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com**

1-800-Pay-1495

Published by the National Safety Commission  
For Teens and their Parents



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 January Teen Death Rate Somewhat Lower
- 2 Crashing Into Water
- 3 Energy Drink Related Emergency Room Visits Double

In the 39 reported fatal crashes reported thus far this month:

- 28 teen drivers were killed.
- 15 teen passengers were killed.
- 10 of the teen drivers were injured.
- 23 additional passengers were injured in fatal collisions.
- 2 occupants of other vehicles were killed.
- 11 people in other vehicles were injured.
- 72% of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.
- Seat belts were not used in 41% of the fatal crashes.
- High speed was identified as the contributing factor in 29% of the crashes.
- 87% of the crashes involved loss of control of the vehicle by the teen driver. (Loss of control is generally caused by a driver distraction in which the driver leaves the road and tries to over-correct, or when the driver is driving too fast for conditions and fails to negotiate a curve or turn, or a combination of high speed and a driver distraction.)



**\$2 Off!**  
**Special Offer!**

Enter coupon code

NL7900

Valid until March 31 2013  
Go to [www.LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com](http://www.LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com)  
and save today!

- Alcohol use was considered to be the contributing factor in 5% of the crashes.
- In 11 of the crashes (29%), the vehicle was carrying 3 or more occupants.
- North Carolina led the nation with 5 deaths followed by California and Texas with 3 each.
- New Year's Day was the deadliest single day with 5 teen deaths.
- The weekends of the 18th through the 20th, with 7 crashes and 7 deaths was the worst period.

This unscientific article search shows that the statistics on teen driving hold up. Most teen driving crashes are single vehicle crashes and the main causes for teen driving deaths are speeding, driver distraction, lack of seat belt use, and use of alcohol or other drugs. Graduated Licensing Laws (GDL) are designed to limit the number of passengers a teen driver can carry and to try to limit distractions by prohibiting use of cell phones. Violating GDL laws can result in suspension of a teen driver's license. Both parents and teens should know and understand their state's Graduated Licensing Laws and parents should enforce them.

## Crashing Into Water

An Effingham County High School senior drowned after being ejected from a car in a single-vehicle accident Wednesday on Rincon-Stillwell Road. Autopsy results released Thursday revealed that the teen's death was due to drowning.

Source: <http://savannahnow.com> ♦

## Lessons Learned

The article above concerns one of at least three teens who were killed by drowning in January after losing control of their vehicle. However, while all three crashes were easily avoidable, in two of these crashes, the teens drowned in very shallow water.

In the article cited above, the driver wasn't identified but

authorities said that speed was a factor. The driver lost control of the vehicle and the vehicle rolled. Neither of the teens was wearing seat belts and the dead victim was found, lying face down, in a ditch filled with standing water. The coroner ruled that drowning was the cause of death.

In another crash, an Indiana teen was killed when he hit standing water on the road and hydroplaned into a flooded field. His car was found upside down in four to five feet of standing water. He wasn't wearing a seat belt.

Aside from the fact that both drivers were apparently driving too fast for conditions, the teens could still have possibly survived the crash had they taken one simple safety precaution: wearing their seat belts.

One common excuse people have for not wearing a seat belt is that they don't want to be trapped by the seat belt should the car go into a body of water. The myth of being trapped by the seat belt under water has to be dispelled.

Figures are hard to come by but, according to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) report, there are an average of about 380 drownings per year as a result of a car crash. That means that out of the 32,885 traffic deaths in 2010, drownings made up 0.01% of the total.

Refusing to wear a seat belt because you have a 0.01% chance of being trapped by the belt underwater is not a good excuse.

Even if your vehicle was to go into water, you have a better chance of remaining conscious and thus escaping, if you are wearing a seat belt.

**Ready to get your Learners Permit?**



**Take the Drug & Alcohol Course at  
LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com**

Experts say that, when your vehicle goes into water, you have just seconds to escape before the water fills the interior of the vehicle. Those precious seconds can be lost if you are seriously injured or rendered unconscious as a result of not wearing a seat belt.

If your car goes into water:

- Unfasten your seat belt.
- Roll down or break the window (water pressure will make it very hard to push the door open).
- Get children out first.
- Follow by crawling out the window – back first.
- Crawl on top of the car.
- If the water is shallow, crawl off the back and wade to shore; if not, wait for rescue.
- DO NOT use your phone to call for help until you are safely out of the vehicle.

## **SEAT BELTS SAVE LIVES!**

## Energy Drink Related Emergency Room Visits Double

According to a [report released in January by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration](#), ER visits related to the use of so called energy drinks doubled from 10,068 visits in 2007 to 20,783 visits in 2011.

We were among the first to write about the issue of energy drinks and their effect on health and driving back in 2009 (<http://alerts.nationalsafetycommission.com/2009/04/energy-drinks-and-driving-car.php>) and have published several articles since but the warning bears repeating.

Energy drinks contain large amounts of caffeine and sugar and are marketed mostly toward young people as a way to gain energy, stay awake, or lose weight. Energy drinks are unregulated and there are really no limits on how much caffeine can be added to a drink.

The problem comes when young people, with their busy schedules try to use the energy drink as a substitute for

sleep. Once the effect of the caffeine wears off, a sleep deprived person will not be able to remain awake.

Another problem is “caffeine intoxication” which comes from overdosing on caffeine, leading to anxiety, excitability, restlessness, and an inability to concentrate. Caffeine in large amounts can lead to even greater health issues, including cardiovascular problems, seizures, and hallucinations.

A real danger comes when the energy drinks are mixed with alcohol or other drugs. According to the report, “bar patrons who consumed alcohol mixed with energy drinks were 3 times more likely to leave a bar highly intoxicated and were 4 times more likely to intend to drive while intoxicated than those who did not consume alcohol mixed with energy drinks.”

The report went on to say: “Of the 20,783 ED visits involving energy drinks in 2011, more than half involved energy drinks only (58 percent), and the remaining 42 percent involved other drugs (Table 1). Pharmaceuticals were most commonly combined with energy drinks (27 percent), with 9 percent involving energy drinks and central nervous system stimulants (e.g., Adderall®, Ritalin®). About 13 percent of visits involved energy drinks and alcohol and one tenth of visits (10 percent) involved energy drinks and illicit drugs, with 5 percent involving energy drinks and marijuana.”

Some health experts have called for the FDA to regulate energy drinks and to place warnings on the labels. Canadian health officials enacted regulations beginning in January that limit the amount of caffeine in one drink to 180 mg or roughly the same amount as that contained in an eight ounce cup of coffee.

Want to pass  
your DMV Exam  
the first time?

Take the DMV Exam Prep Course  
at  
[LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com](http://LowestPriceTrafficSchool.com)

